



## MINUTES

### A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE CITY MUNICIPAL ELECTION LAWS

#### VIRTUAL MEETING

Thursday, August 23, 2023 6:00 PM

**Task Force Members Present:** Scott Gibson, John Michael Gudger, and Andrew Miller. Eileen Leahy, an *ex officio* member, was also present.

**Others Present:**

- Mark Hildebrand, City of Annapolis TV
- Trudy McFall, President of the Anne Arundel County Board of Elections

A quorum being present, the Chair called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

The Task Force heard from Trudy McFall, who in addition to being the President of the Anne Arundel County Board of Election is a city resident and former candidate for mayor.

Ms. McFall shared her support for combining city elections with elections administered by the County Board (i.e., the gubernatorial or presidential election) to not only find cost efficiencies but to also help increase voter turnout.

Ms. McFall was asked whether the County Board would be open to administering elections, if the City chose to follow the example of Hagerstown, which has non-partisan elections administered by their County Board. Ms. McFall expressed personal support for open primaries and did not instinctively know of any opposition to it on the board. Though she could not represent an official position of the Board.

The Task Force then reviewed the results of the survey, which will be posted before the public hearing where residents can further comment. Survey participation by Ward seemed to mirror election turnout patterns. More than half of respondents were Democrats. Republican respondents outnumbered unaffiliated respondents. There seemed to be consensus on many issues:

- There seems to be a consensus that in-person voting should be an option.
- About half of respondents want a mail-in ballot sent to them.



- The majority of respondents wanted the City to change its primary system.
  - Nearly half preferred the City switch to primaries where all eligible, registered voters, regardless of their party affiliation, may vote in a primary where all candidates are listed on one ballot.
  - Another 16% preferred the City switch to primaries where eligible, registered voters unaffiliated with a party can vote in the Democratic or Republic primary.
- There was strong opposition to allowing non-citizens to vote in city elections and to lowering the voting age in city elections to 16.
- There was strong support for term limits for the City Council.

Respondents were more equally divided on whether the election cycle should change, and whether same-day registration should be permitted.

The Task Force discussed how to present discrepancies between the State Law and City Code. It was suggested that because there seems to be a preference for adopting State Law by reference, it may be worth asking whether there are aspects of Annapolis's election that are unique to it and important to preserve.

The Task Force then briefly discussed how to order the questions in order to arrive at its recommendations.

The Task Force also discussed updating its chart summarizing municipal elections by adding filing fees, petition requirements, and the size of the City's Board of Elections.

There being no further business, the Task Force adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Scott T. Gibson, Secretary